



CATS Monthly Newsletter-

January 2026

Dear CATS-

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

2025 was a big year for CATS! We launched the new CATS Online Course, adding more CATS than any year before. We doubled our kittens (our high school ambassadors)! We started the Purr-fessionals. CATS made it on TV with ABC Action News. And we hosted the the largest CATS tour to date! We can't wait for what 2026 has in store for us!

The Welcome Center will be closed January 1st.

In the market for a New Year's Resolution? Drop by the Welcome Center for hundreds of ideas! Saving money? Sign up for our [mobile passes](#). Want to eat more local? Pick up our dining maps. Trying to get out and walk more? Grab a nature guide! Or find a [guide](#) to spark inspiration this 2026!

Stop by the Welcome Center to discover your 2026 adventure!

### **Have you taken the new CATS Online Course?**

This new course will be shorter and easier to complete. Everyone who has been certified will remain certified; however, we encourage EVERYONE to take the new online course.



[Sign up to take the New CATS Online Course!](#)



Let's take a look where CATS went in 2025!

Last year the CATS went to: Lake Kissimmee State Park; The Ashley Gibson Barnett Museum of Art; Bonnet Springs Park; Downtown Winter Haven; Westgate River Ranch Resort & Rodeo; seven Wetlands; the Florida Air Museum; Safari Wilderness; SEALIFE; ABC Action News; Homeland Heritage Park; & Bok Tower Gardens.





Last Month...





**Last month, CATS visited Bok Tower Gardens.**

In December, it is a tradition for the CATS to go to Bok Tower Gardens for our Exclusive Tour! This December we hosted the largest CATS tour ever- 50 People!

CATS met at Bok Tower Gardens to hear all the news from their Director of Business Development & Public Relations. We then enjoyed a delicious lunch catered by the Blue Palmetto Cafe.

**What we learned:** Bok Tower Gardens' koi fish are due home soon. They take residence in the moat around the tower, but after restoration work, the koi went to a spa for rest and health check ups. They hope to see the koi home before February.

Bok Tower has a busy event season starting with the holidays and into the late spring. One event that should be on your radar is the International Carillion Festival, starting March 18th! Check out all Bok Tower Gardens' events [here!](#)

**CATS insider tip:** You will want to catch the Dream Weaver: Tales from the Trees art installation on the North Walk before its over (ending January 31st, 2026). Learn more [here!](#)

Coming Up...



## JANUARY

### Colt Creek State Park

**Details coming soon.**

If you would like to come on one of our CATS Exclusive Tours, you must be a Certified Ambassador of Tourism and Sports. To become an ambassador, you must complete the CATS Online Course.

Our new online class is up and running! Please sign up!

CATS Exclusive Tour Invitations will be emailed to all Certified Ambassadors of Tourism and Sports.

### **CATS Shirts are in!**

Certified Ambassadors of Tourism & Sports can pick up their CATS Shirts at the Welcome Center!

#### How to pick up your CATS Shirt?

- First, you must be a Certified Ambassador of Tourism and Sports.
- Second, inform the front desk you are here to pick up your CATS Shirt.
- Third, show our staff your CATS Certificate!

\*Shirts are limited sized, and are first come, first serve.





### Spring Training

February 7 | 9AM-12PM

Celebrate the start of Spring Training Season at the Welcome Center! We will be giving away commemorative event **T-shirts** to the first 400 visitors, once the event begins at 9 a.m. (one per person, while supplies last). We will also have **Buy One Get One Free tickets** for Bok Tower Gardens (Cash or Credit Card) and LEGOLAND (Date specific & Credit card only). Local vendors will be onsite.



### Birthday Bash

March 7 | 9AM-12PM

The Welcome Center is turning 19! Come celebrate our birthday with us! The Welcome Center's Birthday Bash, is a free, family friendly event featuring free



cookies and light refreshments (while supplies last), free caricatures, giveaways and more. We will also have **Buy One Get One Free tickets** for Bok Tower Gardens (Cash or Credit Card) and LEGOLAND (Date specific & Credit card only). The first 100 visitors will receive a **free gift** and vendors will be on site with local good and treats for sale.

[Save the Dates 2026](#)



**Visit Central Florida's Visitor Experience Team and the Welcome Center is excited to announce the launch of its official Instagram and Facebook pages!**

Now, visitors and locals alike can stay connected and up-to-date with the latest events, attractions, travel tips, and exciting happenings throughout the county. By following these social media platforms, you'll get insider information, special offers, and a closer look at everything Central Florida

and the Visitor Experience Team has to offer. Be sure to follow them today to explore the best of Central Florida and make the most of your visit!

[Follow Visit Central Florida's Visitor Experience Team on Instagram](#)

[Follow Visit Central Florida's Visitor Experience Team on Facebook](#)

PS. CATS have an entire highlight on our @**WelcomeCentralFL** Instagram page!



[Check out our Visit Central Florida Event Page for more fun!](#)

[Download the 'What's Happening in Polk County' Flyer here.](#)

Now - Jan 31

**Dream Weaver: Tales from the Trees**

Dare to dream and step into a world of wonder beneath the shaded canopy of the oaks along Bok Tower Gardens' North Walk. Dream Weaver: Tales from the Trees is an all-new immersive art exhibition that invites you to wander through a mythical landscape where the lines between nature and the supernatural blur.

Jan 23 — Jan 24

**Lakeland Pigfest**

Pigfest is one of the largest Barbecue Competitions in the southeast and the Largest KCBS sanctioned event in Florida. Since 1997, the event has generated over 2 million dollars in charitable donations that have been disbursed to the Lakeland Community through various community partnerships.

Jan 31

**Florida Citrus Festival**

Florida's Citrus Festival invites visitors to celebrate Polk County's rich citrus heritage and create a new annual tradition in the heart of downtown Winter Haven. This family-friendly event honors the legacy of Florida's iconic citrus industry with a full day of entertainment, engaging experiences, and nostalgic fun for all ages.

[View digital guides from Visit Central Florida](#)



## **Avelo Airlines & Lakeland International Airport**

Avelo announced the return of the Atlanta and Charlotte/Concord routes for seasonal flights.

They also announced adding a Detroit route, just in time for spring training season!

[Learn more about flying out of LAL here.](#)

Routes include:

- Atlanta, GA
- Charlotte/Concord, NC
- Detroit, MI
- Grand Rapids, MI
- Nashville, TN
- New Haven, CT
- New York/ Long Island, NY
- Philadelphia/ Wilmington, DE
- Rochester, NY
- San Juan, PR

Passes

**DISCOVER, SIP, SAVOR & EXPLORE POLK COUNTY**

From colorful murals to mouthwatering BBQ and refreshing craft brews, our free Visit Central Florida Passes help you experience the best of Polk County like a local.



#### Sunshine Savings Pass

Enjoy exclusive deals and discounts from local attractions, restaurants, and shops — perfect for exploring more for less!



#### Adventure on Tap: Central Florida Craft Beer Pass

Discover local breweries and sip your way through Polk County. Enjoy exclusive discounts and earn prizes when you check in.



### **Fire & Flavor BBQ Trail Pass**

Follow the scent of smoky perfection and taste your way through Polk County's best BBQ joints while saving along the way.



### **Mural Magic Pass**

Explore the art that brings our communities to life. Visit stunning murals across the county, snap photos, check in, and earn rewards along the way.

[Sign up for passes here](#)

ANY QUESTIONS?

[Email our Education Coordinator](#)



Thank you, CATS!

Visit Central Florida | 101 Adventure Court | Davenport, FL 33837 US

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